

THE NATIONAL BOOK COUNCIL MALTA.

A SELECTION
OF MAJOR
PRIZE-WINNING
AUTHORS



KTIEB.ORG.MT



WHO ARE WE?

We are the National Book Council of Malta (NBC) – a public entity under the remit of the Ministry for Education – that caters for the Maltese book industry, providing various services for authors and publishers.

WHAT DO WE DO?

We are involved in a large number of activities, ranging from international and national to smaller-scale events. Our main events of the year are the Malta Book Festival and the National Book Prize, but we also set up numerous other events – such as the University Campus Book Festival – and administer public lending rights payments and ISBN & ISMN. Additionally, we act as literary agents for authors and publishers at foreign book fairs, and coordinate, facilitate and even subsidise translations and export projects.

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WHO ARE THE MALTESE WRITERS?

For those who are not very familiar with contemporary Maltese literature, this brochure should serve as a very brief introduction.

The literature of Malta boasts a unique feature: since its earliest text in 1450 it has been written in no less than six languages. Maltese and English only became Malta's official languages in 1934, therefore Maltese was transformed from an oral means of communication to a national written language just over 80 years ago. Malta is a melting pot of cultures facing language choice and post-colonial identity issues, although the Maltese language has become a signifier of national pride, a means to establish a truly Maltese-only identity.

The National Book Council plays an important part in brokering publishing deals and providing translation funds, as well as facilitating direct-export funding, for instance by sending authors abroad to festivals and book fairs. Foreign publishers releasing translated Maltese literature are also supported in various ways. Translation funds are allocated yearly to various projects, and over the past two years we have commissioned four different language translations (Arabic, Italian, English and Russian) of the work of our national poet Dun Karm. Finding professional translators from Maltese into other languages can prove to be a daunting task, which is why we also invest in producing bridge translations in English as well as foreign languages.

What does it take for Maltese literature, particularly in its more contemporary expression, to be considered outside of the shores of a small island and beyond the borders of a minority language? Do contact us and one of the NBC representatives will be happy to answer all your queries, send you samples of Maltese literature, and discuss with you exciting possibilities for transnational collaboration projects.

CLARE AZZOPARDI

Clare Azzopardi (b. 1977) is an award-winning author who writes for both children and adults. She is the Head of Department of Maltese at the University of Malta Junior College and for the past several years has been an active member of Inizjamed, an NGO whose mission is to promote literature in Malta and abroad. With Inizjamed, she has co-organised literary festivals and workshops, often in collaboration with Literature Across Frontiers (LAF). Her work has been translated into several languages and has appeared in a number of collections including *Transcript*, *In Focus*, *Cúirt 21*, *Skald*, *Words without Borders*, *Novel of the World* and *Asymptote*. Her play *L-Interdett Taht is-Sodda* was published in French (Éditions Théâtrales, 2008) and in Arabic (I-ACT, 2009). Her teenage novella *Frape* will be published in Latvia in 2019 and was published in Spanish in 2018 (Flores Raras). Azzopardi has also published two books of short stories for adults, both of which won the National Book Prize for Literature – *Il-Linja l-Hadra* ('The green line') and *Kulhadd halla isem warajh* ('The names they left behind'). Her latest collection was published in Croatian (VBZ), Hungarian (Noran Libro), and Arabic (Sefsafa Publishers). Her latest publication is *Castillo*, a detective novel with a twist, a novel about gender, motherhood, and the reverberating and unresolved echoes of political violence past.



SELECTED WORKS

Il-Linja l-Hadra (Merlin Publishers, 2006)
L-Interdett Taht is-Sodda (2008)
Jake Cassar isalva ir-Renju tar-Re Pankrazju IV
(Merlin Publishers, 2009)
Kidane (Jesuit Refugee Service, 2011)
Frejp (Merlin Publishers, 2012)
Kulhadd halla isem warajh (Merlin Publishers, 2014)
Mingu (Merlin Publishers, 2015)
Castillo (Merlin Publishers, 2018)

ANTOINETTE BORG

Antoinette Borg (b. 1973) left her twenty-year business advisory career to pursue her passion for writing. In 2016 she published her first novel, *Fittixni*, which went on to win the Terramaxka National Book Prize in the 13-16 years category. Her second YA novel *(Ri)generazzjoni* won the Literary Contest of Novels for Youth and was published in 2018. Antoinette received the National Book Council's Best Emerging Author award for 2018, and her third novel for youths, *Amina*, won her the 2019 National Book Prize for adolescents. She has just co-authored her latest work *Innuendo* (Merlin Publishers, 2019), consisting of 12 short-stories for adults.



SELECTED WORKS

Fittixni (Merlin Publishers, 2016)
(Ri)generazzjoni (Merlin Publishers, 2018)
Amina (Merlin Publishers, 2019)
Innuendo (Merlin Publishers, 2019) with Anthony Portelli

ANTOINE CASSAR

Antoine Cassar (b. 1978) is a Maltese poet and translator. *Erbghin Jum* (Forty Days), a book-length poem about childhood trauma, depression and walking as self-therapy, was awarded the Malta National Book Prize for poetry, and has been shortlisted for the 2020 Gdansk European Poet of Freedom award. *Passaport*, a long poem printed in the form of an anti-passport for all peoples and all landscapes, has been published in eleven languages, and adapted for the theatre in Malta, France and Belgium. Cassar's multilingual composition *Merħba*, a poem of hospitality, was awarded the United Planet Writing Prize in 2009. As a translator, Cassar has rendered the work of fellow Maltese authors into English (notably the short stories of Pierre J. Mejlak, 2014 EU Prize for Literature) and Spanish (Alex Vella Gera's novel *Troyano*, published in May 2019 by Libros de mentira).

www.antoinecassar.info

www.passaport.info



SELECTED WORKS

Passaport (2009)

Passeport (.d. Fa. Fioc, 2017. French, adapted from the Maltese by Elizabeth Grech)

Erbghin Jum (40 Days, EDE, 2017)

Potni List (Sanje, 2018. Slovenian, trad. Vera Pejovič and Peter Semoli)

Passaport: edizzjoni agġornata (EDE Books, 2020)

LOU DROFENIK

Lou Drofenik (née Zammit, b. 1941) grew up in Malta and now lives in Victoria, Australia. She was an educator in the private school sector and is now a prolific full-time writer. Her award winning novels explore different themes of Maltese culture. She won the National Book Prize 2017 with her novel *The Confectioner's Daughter*, a novel of love, lost innocence and struggle that, spanning a century, starts in a village bakery in Malta and flows seamlessly into the Australian cities of Sydney and Melbourne. The novel reveals the intimate world of women, from the Maltese grandmother – the matriarch who builds a fortune from her baking – to her granddaughter who is desperate to escape the village culture that she feels is suffocating her. Lou's novels are a celebration of Maltese women's lives, their resilience and their intense familial relationships. Lou Drofenik published another novel in 2018, *The Reluctant Healer* (Horizons) which was shortlisted for the National Book Prize in the novels category. Her latest work is *Echoes* (Horizons), published in 2019.



SELECTED WORKS

Birds of Passage (self published, 2005)

In Search of Carmen Caruana (self published, 2007)

Of Cloves and Bitter Almonds (National Biographic, 2008)

Cast the Long Shadow (National Biographic, 2010)

Beloved Convict (Maltese Historical Society, 2013)

Bushfire Summer (self published, 2013)

The Confectioner's Daughter (Horizons, 2016)

Love in the Time of the Inquisition (Horizons, 2017)

The Reluctant Healer (Horizons, 2018)

Echoes - Distant Voices: Distant Lives (Horizons, 2019)

LEANNE ELLUL

Leanne Ellul (b. 1989) writes both poetry and prose. Her literary works appeared online and in newspapers, journals and anthologies. Together with Clare Azzopardi, with whom she also translated the novel *Teresa*, Ellul writes textbooks for young children. She also translated the book *Inhobbok*. Ellul won first place in the national competition for theatre writing Premju Francis Ebejer, and her play *Ma Rrida Immur* was staged at Teatru Manoel, Malta's National Theatre. She won the Novel for Youths Prize in 2014 with her novel *Gramma*, a book that broke all records for Merlin Publishers. In 2015 her short story was chosen to be part in the European showcase Flash Europa 28, and in that same year she took part in the Biennale for Young Artists, held in Milan. In 2016 Ellul was enlisted in the Commonwealth Young Achievers Book and also won the National Book Council's special prize for Best Emerging Author. 2019 will see the publication of her book of poetry and a number of books for children. Her book *Gramma* has also been published in Arabic and presented during the Cairo Book Festival in February 2019.



SELECTED WORKS

Gramma (Merlin Publishers, 2014)

GIOELE GALEA

Gioele Galea (b. 1965) read Theology at the University of Malta. For fourteen years he led a solitary life as a hermit in the Umbrian mountains in Italy. His writing emanates from an agonising need to express the mystery that incessantly engulfs him: the mystery of human life caught in a vortex of thirst for the Absolute. Galea sees no way out of this vortex. His published works – six collections of poetry and the memoir *Thabbat Xtaqtek: Djarju mill-Eremitaġġ* [I thought I heard you knock: Diary from the hermitage] – give witness to an uncompromising journey towards depths where bareness is as overwhelming as much as it is essential. The prose of the memoir is more than diaristic, it is a subtle and elegant narrative depicting a persona in search of God, experiencing the despair of doubt. This is a genre-bending, open-minded text that does not resort to the dogma of religion. It is, ultimately, a writer's clever and philosophical attempt at dialogue with the divine. Published late in 2017, *Thabbat Xtaqtek* had already sold out in its first batch of printing, making it to the Maltese leading bookstore's top ten sellers. But it being such an original and well-written account of solitary life, Gioele Galea's work is much more than a local bestseller and merits recognition beyond our shores.



SELECTED WORKS

Ifriqli Hdanek Berah (Pulprint Publications, 1996)

Dija (Carmelite Institute Malta Publication, 2011)

Bla Qiegh - poezija mit-trab (Horizons, 2015)

Ghera: Poeziji 2013-2016 (Horizons, 2016)

Mal-Waqgħa tal-Weraq/ A Scatter of Leaves (Gioele Galea, Abigail Ardelle Zammit, 2016)

Thabbat Xtaqtek: Djarju mill-Eremitaġġ (Horizons, 2017)

MARIA GRECH GANADO

Maria Grech Ganado, (b. 1943), poet, translator, critic, studied English at the Universities of Malta, Cambridge and Heidelberg. She was the first Maltese female full-time lecturer at the University of Malta (Department of English) and has published eight collections of Maltese and English poetry, four of which were National Book Prize winners. As from 2019, she is the first Maltese poet to ever win the prestigious Poet Laureate Award by the National Book Council of Malta. Her poetry has been translated into Italian, French, German, Greek, Spanish, Turkish, Lithuanian, Finnish, Czech and Catalan. It has appeared in English in the UK, the USA, Australia, South Africa and Cyprus. She has been invited to many literary events in different countries and co-organised an international conference with Literature Across Frontiers in Malta in 2005. In 2008, thanks to an exchange scheme with Saint James Cavalier, Malta, she was a Resident Fellow for six weeks at the Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts. Maria has also translated into English much of the contemporary poetry and prose written by Maltese writers today and published overseas. She received the MQR – Midalja għall-Qadi tar-Repubblika (Medal for Service to the Republic) in 2000, and the National Book Council's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2015. Maria Grech Ganado won the National Book Prize for poetry again in 2019 with her latest collection *Framed* (Merlin Publishers). In this work she offers a penetrating gaze in poems about childhood, family, love, loss and ageing, many with philosophical musings.



SELECTED WORKS

Iċċa Mhux Biss (1999)
Skond Eva (2001)
Ribcage (Minima, 2003)
Fil-Hofra Bejn Spallejha (2005)
Cracked Canvas (2005)
Memory Rape (Inizjamed, Midsea Books 2005)
Taht il-Kpiepel t'Għajnejja (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2014)
Framed (Merlin Publishers, 2018)

STEPHEN LUGHERMO

Stephen Lughermo (b. 1983) holds a BA (Hons) and Masters Degree in Maltese Language and Literature from the University of Malta. Since 2005, he has been teaching Maltese at Secondary School level. In 2014, he won the literary contest Novels for Youth organised by the Maltese National Book Council with his first novel *X'Aħna Smart!*, which was published the following year. Following this success, Lughermo published another YA book, *Jarmuk*, which explores the physical and psychological isolation of a young Syrian immigrant alongside that of a Maltese teenager with family problems. In November 2018 *Jarmuk* won him the Terramaxka Book Prize. In 2018, together with Diane Farrugia, Lughermo published his first book for children, *Ix-Xewqa ta' Luke*, as part of a project aimed at promoting awareness regarding foster care amongst the younger generation. Currently, Lughermo is working on a set of short stories for adults.



SELECTED WORKS

X'Aħna Smart! (Horizons, 2015)
Jarmuk (Horizons, 2017)
Ix-Xewqa ta' Luke (2018)

PIERRE J. MEJLAK

Pierre J. Mejlak (b. 1982) is a novelist and a short-story writer from Gozo. He has written books for children, a novel and two collections of short stories, winning him the European Union Prize for Literature, five Malta National Book awards and the Sea of Words European Short Story Award. A number of his short stories have been translated into English, French, Catalan, Portuguese, Arabic, Spanish and Italian, and were read at numerous literary festivals around Europe and the Middle East. His collection of short stories *Dak li l-Lejl Ihallik Tghid* was published in English translation as *Having Said Goodnight*, with rights sold to various publishers in European countries. In this captivating collection of stories, people are often at crossroads, somewhere between a world they know and one they feel pulled towards. Torn between past and future, centre and periphery, real and imaginary, they move from one point in their existence to another, trying to understand a life they have lived but perhaps never fully comprehended. In 2015 a script based on his short story *Dar ir-Rummi*en ('Pomegranate House') won the NBC PBS Short-film Contest, leading to the making of a film, which was premièred during the Malta Book Festival of 2015. His award-winning novel *Riħ Isfel*, a story about the disappearance of a boy in a typical Maltese village, was also turned into 13-episode primetime TV series. Mejlak's work has been anthologized by various international publishers, including W.W. Norton.



SELECTED WORKS

Riħ Isfel (Merlin Publishers, 2007)
Qed Nistennik Nieżla max-Xita (Merlin Publishers, 2009)
Dak li l-lejl Ihallik Tghid (Merlin Publishers, 2015)
Having Said Goodnight (Merlin Publishers, 2015)

IMMANUEL MIFSUD

Immanuel Mifsud (b. 1967) has published a number of short-story collections, novels and poetry books. In 2002 a short story collection won the National Book Prize for prose. His 2015 novel *Jutta Heim* won the same award. The novel was subsequently published in Slovene by Cankarjeva Založba, in Arabic by Masr el-Arabia, in Serbian by Treći Trg and in Romanian by Nemira. In 2014 Mifsud won the National Book Prize for poetry with *Penelopi Tistenna* [Penelope Waits] which was published in the UK by Arc and in Romania by Editura Max Blecher, and again in 2017 with *Ħuta* (Fish) – published in Serbian by Treći Trg and forthcoming in Slovenia and Egypt. He was the first Maltese writer to win the European Union Prize for Literature with his book *Fl-Isem tal-Missier* (u tal-Iben) [In the name of the father (and the son)], which has been published in English by Parthian, in French by Gallimard, in Romanian by Polirom, in Czech by Vetrné Mylny, in Macedonian by Goten Publishers, in Arabic by Masr El Arabia, in Serbian by Kontrast and in Albanian by Fa Noli. An essential collection of Mifsud's poetry through the years, and a collection of his best short-stories will be published in 2020 by different publishers in Arabic. His is EU award winning book will be published in Croatia by Fraktura. Mifsud's latest original works are the collection of poetry *Madwar Sagħtejn u nofs 'il bogħod mill-Ġenna* (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2019) [At about two and a half hours from Heaven] and a collection of political short-stories, *L-Aqwa Żmien* (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2019) [The Best of Times].



SELECTED WORKS

Fl-isem tal-Missier (u tal-Iben) (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2010)
Ħrejjef mis-Slovakkja (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2011)
Ħrejjef mir-Repubblika Ċeka (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2012)
Penelopi Tistenna (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2013)
Jutta Heim (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2014)
Ħuta (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2016)
Fid-Dlam tal-Lejl Ħarisna (In the Dark Night We Looked) (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2016)
Madwar sagħtejn u nofs 'il bogħod mill-Ġenna (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2019)
L-Aqwa Żmien (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2019)

NADIA MIFSUD

To date, Nadia Mifsud (b. 1976) has published two poetry collections: *żugraga* [Spinning Top] in 2009), and *kantuniera 'l bogħod* [Round the Bend], which was awarded the 2016 National Book Prize (poetry category). 2017 saw the release of her debut novel, *Ir-rota daret dawra (kważi) šhiha* [Going (almost) full circle], shortlisted for the 2018 National Book Prize. Several of her short stories have been published in anthologies both in Malta and abroad. She has also won various times the National Poetry Contest organised by the National Book Council. Mifsud is also a literary translator. Her translation of Immanuel Mifsud's first novel (EU Prize for Literature 2011) was published by Gallimard in 2016 under the title of *Je t'ai vu pleurer*. Nadia Mifsud is particularly interested in feminist literature and theory. For years, she has taken part in programmes devised to encourage reading among children. As part of the central coordinating team of Inizjamed, she has been involved in the organization of the Malta Mediterranean Literature Festival since 2011. Nadia moved to France in 1998 and she has lived there ever since.



SELECTED WORKS

żugraga (2009)

kantuniera 'l bogħod (Skarta, 2015)

Ir-rota daret dawra (kważi) šhiha (Merlin Publishers, 2017)

WALID NABHAN

Walid Nabhan (b. 1966) was born in Amman, Jordan, to a Palestinian refugee family who had fled Palestine in the wake of the 1948 war which saw the establishment of the state of Israel and resulted in the first Palestinian diaspora. Having received his primary education in United Nations school in Amman, Walid arrived in Malta in 1990 where he studied laboratory technology, and later graduated in Biomedical Sciences from Bristol University, England. He has published two collections of short stories in Maltese: *Lura d-Dar u Ġrajjiċet Oħra Li Ma Ġrawx* in 2009 and *Lehen tal-Fuħħar* in 2012. He has also published a poetry collection, *Fi Triqti Lejha*, which was shortlisted in the 2015 edition of the National Book Prize. His novel *L-Eżodu taċ-Ċikonji* was awarded the National Book Prize for prose in 2014 and was translated into Arabic and English in 2018. *L-Eżodu taċ-Ċikonji* is a tale that addresses the plight of the contemporary immigrant in Europe; an intense and intentionally uncomfortable narrative, partly autobiographical, which describes the condition of being relocated without ever having truly left one's origins. Nabhan published the novel *L-Iżvijati* [The De-Railed] in 2017. His critically acclaimed translation of Adrian Grima's poetry into Arabic was published in Cairo in 2017. In 2018 he published the collection of poetry *Of Flesh and Blood* (Kite Group, 2018) alongside the figurative art of Raymond Agius, and his latest collection of short-stories, *Bejn bejnejn* (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2019) [Between in-between]. His writings have appeared in several periodicals and literary publications.



SELECTED WORKS

Lura d-Dar u Ġrajjiċet Oħra Li Ma Ġrawx (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2009)

Lehen tal-Fuħħar (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2012)

L-Eżodu taċ-Ċikonji (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2013)

Fi Triqti Lejha (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2014)

L-Iżvijati (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2017)

Of Flesh and Blood (Kite Group, 2018)

Bejn bejnejn (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2019)

JOHN P. PORTELLI

John P. Portelli (p. 1954) is a Professor of Social Justice Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, where he has taught since 1999. He has also taught at McGill University, Dalhousie University and Mount Saint Vincent University. Portelli is a Fellow of St Michael's College at the University of Toronto and Co-Director of the OISE Centre for Leadership and Diversity. He specializes in philosophy of education, politics and leadership in education. He has published eleven books in his field of study as well as over a hundred academic papers. He has also penned four poetry collections: *Bejn Żewġ Dinjiet / In Between* (2003), *Taht iċ-Ċirasa / Under the Cherry Tree* (2008), *Luggage / Bagage* (2016), and *Xewqat tal-Passa / Migrant Desires* (2017), which was shortlisted for the 2017 Malta National Book Prize. In 2018 he published his first novel in Maltese entitled *Kulhadd barra Fajża* (Horizons) [All but Faiza] which was shortlisted for the National Book Prize for novels, and in 2020 a collection of his poems named *The Loves of Yesterday* was published in Greek by OROPEDIO Publishers in Athens. His latest original work is a collection of short-stories entitled *L-Ittra ta' Osama u stejjer oħra* (Horizons, 2019) [Osama's Letter and other stories]. He currently lives between Toronto and Malta.



SELECTED WORKS

Bejn Żewġ Dinjiet / In Between (Toronto: Melita Books, 2003)
Taht iċ-Ċirasa / Under the Cherry Tree (Malta: PEG Publishers, 2008)
Luggage / Bagage (English and French; Burlington, ON: Word and Deed, 2016)
Xewqat tal-Passa / Migrant Desires (Malta: Horizons 2017)
Everyday Encounters: Short Stories (Burlington, ON: Word and Deed 2019)
L-Ittra ta' Osama u stejjer oħra (Horizons, 2019)

ALFRED SANT

Alfred Sant (b. 1948) is a Maltese Labour Party politician who entered Parliament in 1987, and went on to become Labour leader in 1992. In 1996 he was elected Prime Minister of Malta, in which role he served till 1998. Throughout his career, he has been involved in journalism, literature and theatre. He has also contributed papers and articles to a number of journals and periodicals. His novel *L-Għalqa tal-Iskarjota* [The Iscariot Field], published in 2009, blends black humour and satire with a number of horror stunts that drive the plot towards a cruel climax. It was translated and published in English in 2011. In 2014 Sant won the National Book Prize with his collection of short stories *Ċpar – Aktar Rakkonti u Divertimenti* [Mist – More tales and stories] and in 2019 he won the Lifetime Achievement Award, a prestigious prize by the National Book Council honouring a lifetime of contribution to the Maltese book industry. Other important works by Sant include *La Bidu, La Tmien – 1599, Silġ fuq Kemmuna* and, more recently, *Western – Bejn Rakkonti, Bejn Divertimenti*. In 2018 Sant's first novel, written when he was only 19 years of age and which marked “the birth of the contemporary Maltese novel” (Walid Nabhan), *L-Ewwel Weraq tal-Bajtar* [The first prickly pear leaves] was republished by SKS.



SELECTED WORKS

L-Ewwel Weraq tal-Bajtar (It-Torċa, 1968)
La Bidu, La Tmien – 1599 (PEG, 2001)
Confessions of a European Maltese (Sensiela Kotba Soċjalisti, 2003)
Silġ fuq Kemmuna (Sensiela Kotba Soċjalisti, 2005)
L-Għalqa tal-Iskarjota (PEG Ltd, 2009)
Pupu, fil-Baħar – Rakkonti u Divertimenti (Sensiela Kotba Soċjalisti, 2010)
The Iscariot Field (self published, 2011)
Ċpar – Aktar Rakkonti u Divertimenti (Sensiela Kotba Soċjalisti, 2013)
Western – Bejn Rakkonti u Divertimenti (Sensiela Kotba Soċjalisti, 2016)

KARL SCHEMBRI

Karl Schembri (b. 1978) is a Maltese poet, novelist and journalist. He graduated in sociology from the University of Malta and has published short stories, *Taħt il-Kappa tax-Xemx* [Under the Sun] and a novel, *Il-Manifest tal-Killer* [Killer's Manifesto]. A collection of his Maltese poetry was published in Malta in 2013 called *Passju Taħt ix-Xita* [Hopscotch in the Rain] and a book of his poetry in English, *Remember the Future*, was published in the US. His poetry has been published in French, Spanish and Arabic translation. *Il-Manifest tal-Killer* was censored in 2007 by the University of Malta's radio station Campus FM, after the management deemed it too offensive to be broadcast on radio. A dramatic adaptation of the novel was presented a year later. In 2009 he coedited an anthology of poems called *Id-Demm Nieżel Bħax-Xita* [Blood is pouring like rain] – in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza while the 22-day Israeli military offensive was raging on. He has lived for four years in the Gaza Strip as a journalist and as a media officer with Oxfam. He presently lives with his dog Marx in Amman, Jordan, where he is Regional Media Adviser in the Middle East with the Norwegian Refugee Council.



SELECTED WORKS

Taħt il-Kappa tax-Xemx (Minima Publishers, 2002)
Il-Manifest tal-Killer (Choppy Books, 2006)
Id-Demm Nieżel Bħax-Xita (editor, Skarta Publications, 2009)
Passju taħt ix-Xita (Horizons, 2013)

ĠUŻÈ STAGNO

Ġużè Stagno (b. 1976) is the author of four novels: *Inbid ta' Kuljum*, *Xemx*, *Wisq Sabiha*, *Ramon u ż-Żerbinotti* and his latest *What Happens in Brussels Stays in Brussels*, which broke local record sales in its first week. He lives in Brussels, where he works as a conference interpreter. Amongst others, Stagno heralded in the early years of the century a new genre in Maltese literature, a realistic and often controversial 'pop' genre that appealed to youth and adults alike. His work blends the realistic, the mundane and the satirical, often verging on dark humour.



SELECTED WORKS

Inbid ta' Kuljum (Minima Publishers, 2001)
Xemx, *Wisq Sabiha* (Minima Publishers, 2003)
Ramon u ż-Żerbinotti (Merlin Publishers, 2008)
What Happens in Brussels Stays in Brussels (Merlin Publishers, 2013)

LORANNE VELLA

Loranne Vella (b. 1972) is a Maltese writer, translator and performer. Between 2007-2009 she cowrote the three volumes of the *Fiddien Trilogy* with Simon Bartolo, novels that shattered all sales records in the field of literature for children and young adults, and are still widely read. Each of the three volumes won the National Book Prize, and are currently being translated into Spanish. In 2012, Vella's novel *MagnaTM Mater* won second prize in the category for young adults. *Rokit*, her latest novel, was published to critical and public acclaim in March 2017, and won the National Book Prize in 2018. As with her previous works, this was published by Merlin Publishers, Malta's award-winning and leading publishing house. *Rokit* has been Deal of the Week for three consecutive weeks at W.H. Smith. Vella has also translated several books for children, two of which won the Terramaxka National Children's Books Prize in 2015 and 2016. Loranne's latest work is a collection of short stories, *Mill-Bieb 'il Ġewwa* (EDE Books, 2019) [Take A Look Inside (Me)]. She lives in Brussels where she also directs the interdisciplinary performance art group Barumbara Collective.



SELECTED WORKS

Fiddien Trilogy (with Simon Bartolo; Merlin Publishers, 2007-2009)
MagnaTM Mater (Merlin Publishers, 2012)
Rokit (Merlin Publishers, 2017)
Mill-Bieb 'il Ġewwa (EDE Books, 2019)

ALEX VELLA GERA

Following University, a series of dead-end jobs in journalism and librarianship, as well as a five-year stint in Prague playing the bohemian, Alex Vella Gera (b. 1973) now lives in Brussels, earning a living translating into Maltese for the European Union. His interests are not limited to writing and include film making and music. In 2011 Vella Gera found himself at the centre of a heated controversy about censorship in Malta, and he also faced the prospect of a prison sentence following the publication of his explicit short story *Li Tkisser sewwi* [You should fix what you break] in University student newspaper *Realtà*. He published his first novel *L-Antipodi* [Antipodes] in 2010. In 2013 he won the National Book Prize for prose with his second novel, *Is-Sriep Reġġhu Saru Velenużi* [Snakes have become venomous again], a novel about a man experiencing an existential crisis on several levels and exhibiting a love-hate relationship with the country from which he has fled. His last novel, *Trojan*, won the National Book prize for prose in 2016. The narrative revolves around one angry man, Ġanni Muscat, who feels that humanity has been betrayed by atheistic liberalism. *Trojan* has been translated into Arabic in 2019 by Mahrousa, and was published in Spanish in May 2019 by Libros de mentira in Chile, under the title *Troyano* (translated by Antoine Cassar). The Spanish version of *Trojan* will also be published in Peru, Bolivia and Argentina in 2020.



SELECTED WORKS

Lil Hinn mill-Jien (self published, 2009)
ŻEWĠ (self published, 2009)
L-Antipodi (self published, 2010)
Is-Sriep Reġġhu Saru Velenużi (Merlin Publishers, 2012)
Trojan (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2015)
Troyano (Libros de mentira, 2019)

TREVOR ŻAHRA

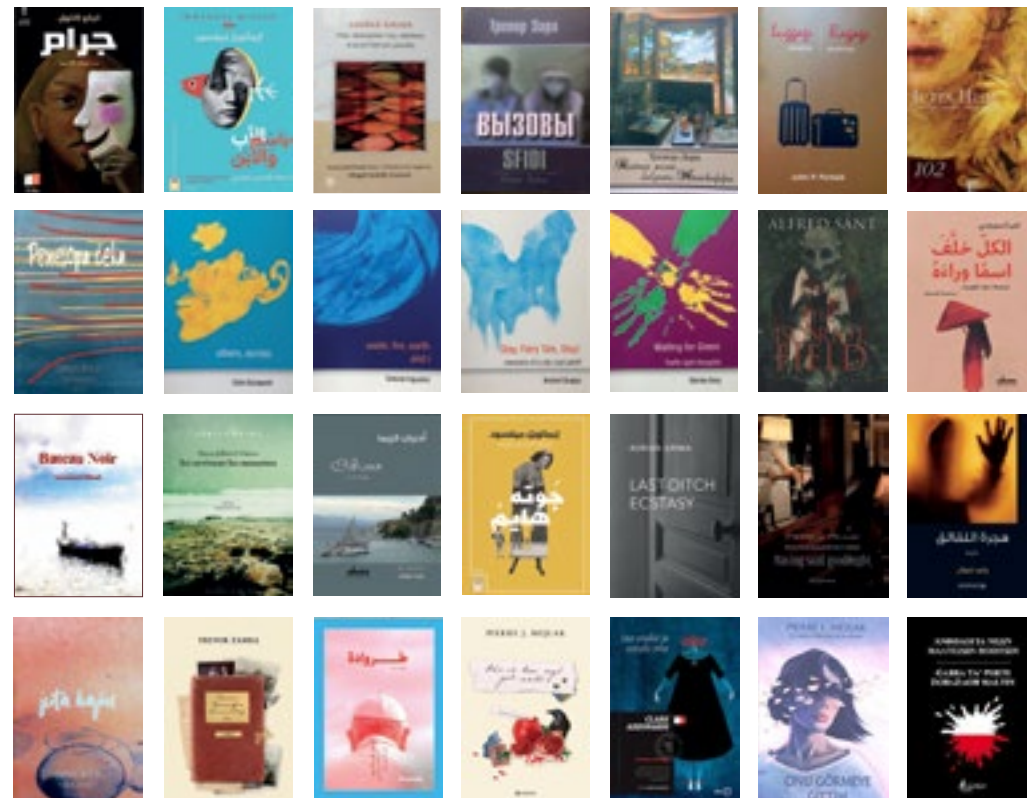
Trevor Żahra (b. 1947) has been on the literary scene since 1971, when he published his first children's book – one of the first to be published in Malta. From then onwards he kept publishing regularly, and to date he has published over 130 titles. His first adult novel, *Taħt il-Weraq tal-Palm* [Under the Palm Tree], won first prize in a 1974 national competition. He was awarded the 1995 Literary Prize for his fantasy novel *Is-Seba' Tronġiet Mewwija* [The Seven Enchanted Grapefruit]. He holds the record for winning the National Book Prize eighteen times. His short novel *Il-Ħajja Sigrieta tan-Nanna Ġenoveffa* [The Secret Life of Grandma Genoveffa] has been published in English, French, Russian and Norwegian. A collection of his adult short stories has been published in France, while his teenage novel *Sfidi* [Challenges] has been published in Russia. His latest collection of short stories, *Vespri* ('Vespers'), was awarded the National Book Prize in 2016. Żahra has also worked extensively for the theatre, producing plays, musicals and pantomimes. His plays have been performed at the Manoel Theatre, the University Theatre and St. James Cavalier. In 2004 he was decorated with a Medal for Service to the Republic by the President of Malta in recognition for his contribution towards children's literature. His latest work is a collection of 365 short stories, anecdotes and reflections, one per day, named *365* (Merlin Publishers, 2019), which won him the National Book Prize in the short stories category.



SELECTED WORKS

- Lubien* (Merlin Publishers, 1996)
- Sfidi* (Merlin Publishers, 2005)
- Il-Ħajja Sigrieta tan-Nanna Ġenoveffa* (Merlin Publishers, 2008)
- Paroli* (Merlin Publishers, 2010)
- Penumbra* (Merlin Publishers, 2010)
- Tqasqis* (Merlin Publishers, 2012)
- Shab* (Merlin Publishers, 2015)
- Vespri* (Merlin Publishers, 2015)
- Xemgħat* (Merlin Publishers, 2017)
- 365* (Merlin Publishers, 2019)

SOME MALTESE BOOKS IN TRANSLATION





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